

Employee Spotlight: Sangeeta Ghosh



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am an attorney by profession, originally from India, and for the past 30 years, my husband (engineer) and I have made Grand Rapids our home. We are celebrating 33 years of marriage this year. We are also proud parents to our son, who has followed in our professional footsteps and is carving out a niche in the legal-tech space.

I have also had the privilege of serving on the Board of Trustees for several esteemed organizations, including the Grand Rapids Bar Association, the Justice Foundation of West Michigan, the Legal Assistance Center, and the West Michigan

Asian American Association. Outside of my work, I am passionate about traveling, reading, experimenting in the kitchen, and dancing. I can say that I have added some rhythm and dance at the downtown festivals and cultural events.

What is your position at Kent County and what individuals do you work with?

As Assistant Corporate Counsel II, I serve within the Office of the Corporate Counsel, which provides comprehensive legal, strategic, and compliance guidance across a broad spectrum of County operations. Our office supports the Board of Commissioners, elected and appointed officials, and all internal departments in navigating complex legal matters. In this role, I engage with internal leadership, employees, elected officials (including the Sheriff, Prosecutor, Treasurer, Clerk, and Drain Commissioner), judges and court administrators, outside legal counsel, other governmental units, public entities, regulatory agencies, lobbyists, vendors, and when necessary, members of the public.

What are two or three things that staff should know about your role?

This is my 23rd year at the Corporate Counsel's Office, and my responsibilities have spanned FOIA advisory, contract review and negotiation, litigation support and management of outside counsel, data privacy and confidentiality, public...

Employee Spotlight: Sangeeta Ghosh

Continued from page 1...

records management, regulatory compliance intergovernmental coordination, develop policies and procedures, and legal risk assessment and mitigation. One of the matters that I have been overseeing, since 2018, is the multi-district Opioid Litigation and settlement agreements for which the County has received \$5.7 million as of this month, in settlement funds to abate the opioid epidemic.

What is the most rewarding part of your job? What is the most challenging?

The most rewarding aspect of my role is the opportunity to contribute to the public good by providing legal services to elected officials and departments that directly impact effective governance, programming, and public services. Seeing the tangible outcomes of this work in the community is both humbling and gratifying. One of the most challenging aspects of my role is navigating legal gray areas and addressing novel or emerging issues such as Vapor intrusion, PFAS, SARS/H1N1, Ebola, COVID-19, changes in property tax

laws, firearm laws, environmental health laws and other areas where there is often no definitive answer readily available. Staying ahead of changing legal landscapes whether in data privacy, regulatory or technological changes such as Artificial Intelligence demands continuous learning and adaptability. While challenging, these complexities also make the work intellectually rewarding.

Do you have any interesting/fun stories about your experience working with co-workers or clients/residents?

Over the years, my work in the Corporate Counsel's Office has offered a wide array of fascinating and memorable experiences enough to fill a book.

I had the opportunity to be present during the execution of a civil search warrant by the Sheriff's Officers and Health Department officials at the office of Dr. Robert Stokes, a dermatologist. The warrant authorized the seizure of thousands of patients records amid concerns about exposure to infections due to unsafe sanitation practices. As a result, the Health Department issued more than 13,000 letters recommending testing for Hepatitis B, C and HIV.

Another example is when I negotiated a contract with Lionsgate Productions to allow the filming of the movie "Set Up," starring Curtis '50 Cent' Jackson, Bruce Willis, & Ryan Phillippe in our jail facilities.

Employee Spotlight: Sangeeta Ghosh

Continued from page 2...

This required coordination of operational security and legal safeguards, while securing waivers of liability ensuring the County's interests were protected during the production.

My last story is when I collaborated with our Prosecutor Chris Becker in responding to a Freedom of Information Act request submitted by NBC. The request led to the release of audio-video recordings of interviews of the victim, suspect and witnesses, phone text messages, and other evidence. These materials were featured in a Dateline episode titled 'Dangerous Liaisons' reported by Keith Morrison. The episode focused on a high-profile case involving an inappropriate relationship between a

high school student and a teacher, culminating in an emotional courtroom battle that drew significant attention.

Is there anything else you want to say/talk about?

I believe that it is essential for public attorneys to serve their communities through pro bono and volunteer work which underscores the importance of access to justice. Recently, I had a fulfilling experience helping individuals clear their criminal records at an expungement clinic. The clean slate gives these individuals a second chance at employment, housing, and in rebuilding their lives.

